

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 EC BRU 06264 01 OF 02 102032Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 EC BRUSSELS 06264

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TAGS: EEC

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DEBATE ON EUROPEAN UNION

REFS: A. EC BRUSSELS 5745, B. EC BRUSSELS 5854

1. SUMMARY. DEBATE BEGAN ON JULY 9 IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMANT IN STRASBOURG ON ITS REPORT ON EUROPEAN UNION. BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS ADDRESSED THE ASSEMBLY IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE EUROPEAN "WISE MAN." ORTOLI SPOKE TO THE EC COMMISSION'S REPORT. MOST POLITICAL GROUPS SUPPORTED THE MAIN THRUST OF THE PARLIAMENT'S REPORT ALTHOUGH FIFTY-ONE AMENDMENTS HAVE BEEN TABLED. A VOTE IS EXPECTED ON JULY 10. END SUMMARY

2. THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON JULY 9 OPENED DEBATE ON THE REPORT ON EUROPEAN UNION PREPARED BY THE PARLIAMENT'S POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. (THE STUDY, KNOWN AS THE BERTRAND REPORT AFTER THE RAPPOREUR OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE, WAS SUMMARIZED IN REFTEL A.) IN ADDRESSING THE PARLIAMENT, BERTRAND DESCRIBED THE REPORT AS BEING VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH AND ALMOST A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT ON EUROPEAN UNION RECENTLY RELEASED BY THE EC COMMISSION (REFTEL B). BERTRAND WENT TO SOME LENGTH TO EMPHASIZE

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 EC BRU 06264 01 OF 02 102032Z

THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN UNION ENVISAGED IN HIS

REPORT. HE PERSONALLY DISASSOCIATED HIMSELF FROM THE SECTION WHICH SPECIFIES EXPLICITLY THAT THE EUROPEAN UNION SHOULD DEAL WITH SECURITY POLICY. HE ARGUED THAT FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH THE REPORT SETS FORTH AS ANOTHER COMPETENCE OF THE UNION, INCLUDES SECURITY MATTERS, AND THEREFORE THERE IS NO NEED FOR SPECIFIC MENTION OF SECURITY.

3. BERTRAND INDICATED THAT HE WAS SENSITIVE TO THE ISSUE OF CEDING SOVEREIGNTY BUT ARGUED THAT MEMBER STATES WOULD ACTUALLY EXPAND THE AREA OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY NOT LIMIT IT IN A EUROPEAN UNION AS OUTLINED IN HIS REPORT. BY ACTING TOGETHER, THE MEMBER STATES WOULD BE ABLE TO EXERT A COLLECTIVE INFLUENCE WHICH WOULD BE GREATER THAN WHAT THEY COULD ACCOMPLISH INDIVIDUALLY. BERTRAND, LIKE MOST SPEAKERS AFTER HIM, EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. HE SAID IF THE MEMBER STATES FAILED TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION BEFORE THE END OF 1978, THEY WOULD BE CONCEDING THAT THE POLITICAL WILL FOR EUROPEAN UNION WAS LACKING.

4. IN THE DEBATE FOLLOWING BERTRAND'S PRESENTATION, ALL MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPS EXCEPT THE NEWLY SEATED BRITISH LABOR DELEGATION AND THE COMMUNISTS, INDICATED GENERAL APPROVAL OF THE BERTRAND REPORT'S MAJOR CONCLUSIONS. THE COMMUNISTS ARGUED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE TREATY OF ROME THAT CALLED FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ON THE BROAD SCOPE ENVISAGED IN THE REPORT. MOREOVER IT FAILED TO GIVE PROPER WEIGHT TO THE MAJOR TASK FACING EUROPE WHICH WAS BETTERING THE POSITION OF THE WORKING CLASSES. THE UK LABOR SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED THAT THE LABOR PARTY HAD NOT HAD THE REPORT LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE A REASONABLE DECISION AND WOULD THEREFORE ABSTAIN. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, LABORITES WERE SPLIT ON THE MERITS OF THE REPORT.

5. PREDICTABLY THE MOST POPULAR PROPOSAL WAS THE CALL FOR UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ITSELF, COUPLED WITH AN INCREASE IN PARLIAMENT'S AUTHORITY. THIS THEME WAS PLUGGED BY ALMOST EVERY SPEAKER. THE SOCIALISTS' SPOKESMAN SET THE TONE SAYING ONE COULD NOT EXPECT EUROPEANS TO BE ENTHUSED ABOUT VOTING FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WHICH WAS NO MORE THAN A CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY. THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL THEMES RECURRED THROUGHOUT THE DEBATE:

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 EC BRU 06264 01 OF 02 102032Z

-- INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: PROPONENTS OF THE UNION ARGUED THAT NEW INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT WOULD BE UP TO THE NEXT GENERATION TO DEVISE WAYS TO MAKE USE OF THE TOOLS PROVIDED BY THIS GENERATION. THE OPPONENTS OF THE UNION HELD THAT EXISTING INSTITUTIONS WERE ADEQUATE AND THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS MORE IMAGINATION IN MAKING USE OF THEM.

-- TIMING: THE DATE 1980, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE 1972 SUMMIT WAS A TARGET FOR EUROPEAN UNION, WAS MENTIONED BY A NUMBER OF SPEAKERS. MOST EMPHASIZED THAT THE UNION WOULD NOT BE FULLY ACHIEVED BY THEN BUT THAT A FIRM COMMITMENT TO UNION BY THAT DATE WAS A REASONABLE GOAL.

-- SECURITY: A NUMBER OF SPEAKERS WERE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE INCLUSION OF "SECURITY" AS AN AREA FOR WHICH THE UNION WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE. SOME, SUCH AS THE SOCIALISTS, BELIEVED SECURITY COULD SIMPLY BE SUBSUMED UNDER THE RUBRIC OF FOREIGN POLICY.

-- POLITICS OF THE POSSIBLE: OPINION WAS DIVIDED ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE REPORT WENT TOO FAR OR NOT FAR ENOUGH. THE UK CONSERVATIVES, ARGUING THAT THE REPORT GOES TOO FAR FOR THE MAJORITY OF EUROPEANS IN 1975, HAVE TABLED A NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD WATER DOWN THE REPORT.

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 06264 02 OF 02 101845Z

67

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9235

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 EC BRUSSELS 06264

6. EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT ORTOLI SPOKE FOLLOWING INITIAL PRESENTATIONS BY THE SPOKESMEN FOR THE POLITICAL GROUPS. HE DEFENDED THE COMMISSION'S PAPER ON UNION SAYING THAT WHILE IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT THIS WAS A TIME FOR CONSOLIDATION OF THE EXISTING COMMUNITY IN THE WAKE OF THE UK REFERENDUM, THE

COMMISSION HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN MANDATED TO PRODUCE A REPORT AND HAD DONE SO. ORTOLI STRESSED THE GRADUAL NATURE OF THE CHANGES CALLED FOR BY THE COMMISSION IN SUCH AREAS AS FOREIGN POLICY AND MONETARY AND ECONOMIC POLICY. THE ONE EXCEPTION TO THE GRADUAL APPROACH WAS THAT THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE UNION MUST BE PUT IN PLACE BY A "SINGLE SIGNIFICANT ACTION." IN THIS CONNECTION, HE NOTED THAT THE COMMUNITY'S EXISTING INSTITUTIONS WERE ESTABLISHED BY THE ROME TREATY AND WERE IN PLACE AS SOON AS THE TREATY BECAME EFFECTIVE. ORTOLI WAS NOT SPECIFIC ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THE NEW INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY BUT HE EMPHASIZED THAT REALITY DICTATED THAT THE STATES THEMSELVES WOULD HAVE TO BE FULLY REPRESENTED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.

7. BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS, WHO WAS PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE DEBATE, SPOKE IN HIS EUROPEAN "WISE MAN" CAPACITY. HE WAS CAREFUL NOT TO TIP HIS HAND AS TO WHAT DIRECTION HIS OWN
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 EC BRU 06264 02 OF 02 101845Z

REPORT WOULD TAKE SAYING THAT HE HAD COME ONLY TO LISTEN AND TO LEARN. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF EUROPE HAD TAKEN A REVOLUTIONARY TURN AFTER WORLD WAR II AND HE CONSIDERED THAT THE BUILDING OF EUROPE WAS NOW ONLY HALF COMPLETED. HOWEVER EUROPE MOVES IN THE SECOND HALF OF ITS METAMORPHOSIS, IT WILL HAVE TO PROCEED FIRMLY ON THE BASIS OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. TINDEMANS HOPES GOVERNMENTS WILL TAKE EARLY ACTION TO APPROVE UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE OF THE PARLIAMENT, SINCE IT WOULD BE THE PARLIAMENT THAT WOULD PUT THE DEMOCRATIC STAMP ON THE UNION.

8. DEBATE ON THE BERTRAND REPORT CONTINUES ON JULY 10 FOLLOWED BY A VOTE ON THE REPORT AND ON THE FIFTY-ONE AMENDMENTS TABLED. MOST OBSERVERS ARE HEDGING THEIR BETS ON THE OUTCOME BUT GENERALLY EXPECT THAT THE REPORT WILL ULTIMATELY BE APPROVED AND THAT IF AMENDED THE GENERAL EFFECT WILL BE TO WATER DOWN THE REPORT RATHER THAN STRENGTHEN IT. MYERSON

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